The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

5   1.   System for comparing source files, comprising:

       a language specific parser;

       an edit system including a comparator for comparing at least two files, said
10   comparator selectively querying said language specific parser for any compare
       extensions.

       2.   The system of claim 1, said edit system further comprising:

15   a set of compare methods defining a compare stategy for execution by said
       comparator;

       said comparator being responsive to said language specific parser for selectively
       extending said compare strategy in accordance with said compare extensions.

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       3.   The system of claim 2, said edit system further comprising:

       a compare command enabled by an extension registration process for querying said
       language specific parser for said compare extensions.   .

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       4.   The system of claim 3, further comprising:

       a common parser including a register compare extensions entry point responsive
       to a call from said comparator initiating said extension registration process for
30   registering a default strategy; and

said language specific parser for extending said common parser by overriding said register compare extension entry point with any compare extensions to be registered.

5.   The system of claim 3, said language specific parser further comprising a plurality of platform specific parsers for extending said language specific parser by registering extensions for different platforms.

6.   The system of claim 2, further comprising a plurality of languages specific parsers.

7.   The system of claim 6, said comparator initiating said compare registration process when each of said files is associated with a same language specific parser.

8.   The system of claim 1, further comprising a display for displaying in a pull-down menu a plurality of compare utility actions and compare options, said compare options comprising a compare strategy including said compare extensions.

9.   The system of claim 1, said compare extensions specifying that said comparator ignore comments.

10.   The system of claim 1, said compare extensions specifying the comparison of functions and methods defined in source files without regard to their detailed implementation.

11.   The system of claim 1, said compare extensions specifying the comparison of code while ignoring text located outside of margins, in a prefix area, and/or including or excluding sequence numbers.

12.   The system of claim 1, said compare extensions specifying the comparison of source code statement by statement.

13. The system of claim 12, said comparison of source code statement by statement effectively ignoring differences in formatting styles.

14. The system of claim 1, said compare extensions providing for the comparison of constant key definitions and identification of a change in value without flagging every line containing a given changed constant key as non-comparing.

15. The system of claim 1, said compare extensions providing for changed class or variable names as expected changes not to be flagged as non-comparing.

16. System for comparing document files, comprising:

a language specific parser;

an edit system including a comparator for comparing two files, said comparator selectively querying said language specific parser for any compare extensions;

a display for displaying in a pull-down menu a plurality of compare utility actions and compare options, selected said compare options comprising a compare strategy including said compare extensions;

said language specific parser being responsive to user selection of a said compare extension for providing a corresponding method to said comparator; and

said display further for displaying said document files with non-comparing elements highlighted according to said compare strategy.

17. Method for comparing entities, comprising:

    selecting a plurality of compare entities;

5   identifying an attached parser corresponding to each said compare entity;

    responsive to each said compare entity being identified to the same attached parser, executing a compare extension registration process;

10 responsive to said compare extension registration process, defining a compare strategy for comparing said entities.

18. The method of claim 17, further comprising the step of:

15 responsive to user selection of a compare action, displaying to said user a compare dialog for selecting said plurality of compare entities.

19. The method of claim 18, further comprising the step of:

20 responsive to said compare extension registration process, displaying to said user a further dialog comprising language specific compare options for user selection in defining said compare strategy.

20. The method of claim 19, further comprising the steps of:

25 responsive to said compare action, registering a default strategy; and

    selectively extending or overriding said default strategy with any compare extensions to be registered.

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21.   The method claim 20, further comprising the step of:

operating a language specific parser and one of a plurality of platform specific parsers to register said compare extensions.

22.   The method of claim 17, said compare strategy specifying that comments be ignored.

23.   The method of claim 17, said compare strategy specifying the comparison of functions and methods defined in source files without regard to their detailed implementation.

24.   The method of claim 17, said compare strategy specifying the comparison of code while ignoring text located outside of margins, in a prefix area, and/or including or excluding sequence numbers.

25.   The method of claim 17, said compare strategy specifying the comparison of source code statement by statement.

26.   The method of claim 17, said comparison of source code statement by statement effectively ignoring differences in formatting styles.

27.   The method of claim 17, said compare strategy providing for the comparison of constant key definitions and identification of a change in value without flagging every line containing a given changed constant key as non-comparing.

28.   The method of claim 17, said compare strategy providing for changed class or variable names as expected changes not to be flagged as non-comparing.

29.   Method for comparing document files, comprising the steps of:

comparing within an edit system at least two document files according to a compare strategy including compare extensions provided by an external language specific parser; and

displaying said document files with non-comparing elements highlighted according to said compare strategy.

30.   A program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by a machine to perform method steps for comparing document files, said method steps comprising:

comparing within an edit system at least two document files according to a compare strategy including compare extensions provided by an external language specific parser; and

displaying said document files with non-comparing elements highlighted according to said compare strategy.

31.   A program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by a machine to perform method steps for entities, said method steps comprising:

selecting a plurality of compare entities;

identifying an attached parser corresponding to each said compare entity;

responsive to each said compare entity being identified to the same attached parser, executing a compare extension registration process;

responsive to said compare extension registration process, defining a compare strategy for comparing said entities; and

responsive to user selection of a compare action, displaying to said user a compare
5   dialog for selecting said plurality of compare entities.

32.   The program storage device of claim 31, said method steps further comprising:

responsive to said compare extension registration process, displaying to said user
10   a further dialog comprising language specific compare options for user selection in defining said compare strategy;

responsive to said compare action, registering a default strategy; and

15   selectively extending or overriding said default strategy with any compare extensions to be registered.

33.   The program storage device of claim 31, said compare strategy specifying that comments be ignored.

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34.   The program storage device of claim 31, said compare strategy specifying the comparison of functions and methods defined in source files without regard to their detailed implementation.

25   35.   The program storage device of claim 31, said compare strategy specifying the comparison of code while ignoring text located outside of margins, in a prefix area, and/or including or excluding sequence numbers.

36.   The program storage device of claim 31, said compare strategy specifying the
30   comparison of source code statement by statement.

37.   The program storage device of claim 31, said comparison of source code statement by statement effectively ignoring differences in formatting styles.

38.   The program storage device of claim 31, said compare strategy providing for the comparison of constant key definitions and identification of a change in value without flagging every line containing a given changed constant key as non-comparing.

39.   The program storage device of claim 31, said compare strategy providing for changed class or variable names as expected changes not to be flagged as non-comparing.

40.   A computer program product or computer program element for executing the method steps of:

comparing within an edit system at least two document files according to a compare strategy including compare extensions provided by an external language specific parser; and

displaying said document files with non-comparing elements highlighted according to said compare strategy.

41.   The system of claim 1, said compare extensions providing for comparing documents according to an attribute of the type of file handled by said edit system.